

4.3 Christian Practices, Rituals and Symbols



Practices and Rituals

- Most rituals take place in church.
- Small rituals, like the sign of the cross, lighting of candles, and kissing icons depicting Jesus occur when entering a church.
- Roman Catholics dip two fingers in holy water at the back of the church and bless themselves before walking to pew.

Christian Worship Service

- Christian worship occurs on Sunday or Saturday evening.
- Liturgy of the word, highlights readings and preaching.
- Readings from gospels of New Testament, which describe the life and teachings of Jesus.
- Priest says homily or sermon after the liturgy of the word.

Christian Worship Service

- Elements of Christian worship service:
 - Prayers
 - Scripture Readings
 - Singing of Psalms
 - Communion (bread and wine)
 - Collection of offerings



Holy Communion

- A representation of the meal that Jesus shared with his disciples
- First there is a sacred ritual of blessing the elements of the meal (done by the priest)
- Second the blessed body and blood (host and wine, symbolizing the body and blood of Jesus) is shared by the congregation



Christian Prayer

- Christians pray both individually and in groups.
- The Lord's Prayer is the most widely used prayer in all of Christianity.
- Roman Catholic's use this prayer as part of the rosary.
- Beads arranged in five groups of ten.



Fasting

- Christians mainly fast during Lent, before Easter.
- Commemorates the 40 days during Jesus' fasting in the desert.



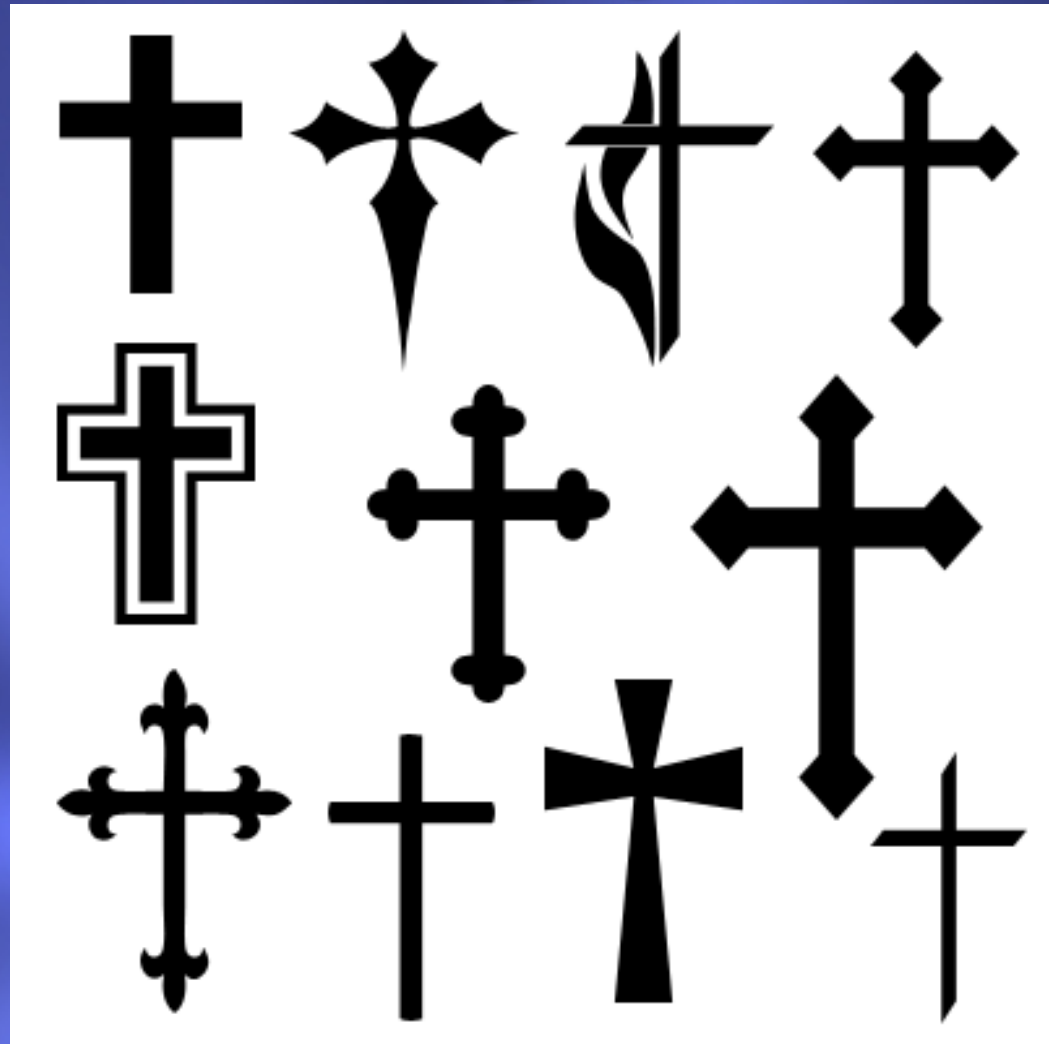
Practice of Giving

- Christians are expected to contribute to their church financially.
- Also encouraged to volunteer in the community.
- Joining organizations such as Habitat for Humanity or Out of the Cold.



Symbols/Icons

- The Cross: see page 279.



Symbols/Icons

- Chi Rho: represents Jesus.
- Looks like a “P” and an “X.”
- First two letters of the Greek word meaning “Christ.”



Symbols/Icons

- Fish: recalls Jesus' words to his first disciples: "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men," (Mark 1:17).
- Linked to spreading the gospel of Jesus.



Ι	Ιησους	=	Jesus
χ	Χριστός	=	Christ
θ	θεός	=	God
ύ	υιός	=	Son
ς	σωτήρ	=	Savior